

Coach House Church BEACONS

WHAT IS TRUTH?

16TH SEPTEMBER 2020

Our reading relates the encounter which Jesus had with Pontius Pilate when He was taken before the Roman governor by the Jewish religious leadership, so that they could secure the death penalty for Jesus.

Here it was that possibly, Pilate, for the first time in his life, came face to face with Truth. According to history, and I don't have the citations to hand, Pontius Pilate was a vicious and corrupt individual who was eventually removed from his office in Judea.

But here, in Jesus, for just a little while he had the opportunity to look truth in the face – in Jesus' face. Who knows? Maybe he saw in Jesus the character traits so sadly absent from his own life. At any rate, he believed Jesus to be innocent of the charges the Jewish religious leaders accused Him of.

Pilate was bothered about the accusation that Jesus had claimed kingship over the Jews. At that time, Herod Antipas was "king of the Jews" by Rome's permission. So, Pilate had to investigate this. And though it is true that Jesus is the rightful king of the Jews yet He never claimed that kingship during His first term here. That is yet to come.

Is Jesus a king, or isn't He?

Jesus wanted Pilate to think about what he was asking: had he arrived at this suspicion by himself, or was his information second hand? He had to decide about Jesus' standing. This is a question we must address too. Is Jesus a king, or isn't He? Because if He is then we must consider His potential claim on our lives. Even we Christians need to remind ourselves about the Lordship of Jesus in our lives. Paul says of Jesus in Philippians chapter 2:

“Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”.

This is true of Jesus now and in the future. Pilate didn't believe that Jesus was a king. But then he didn't really have the time of day for Jesus; he wanted Jesus out of his hair.

Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this present world. So, there, Jesus admitted His kingship! But He wanted Pilate to know that His kingship was not a challenge to Rome. Rome was of this world – of this spiritual milieu. And though Pilate didn't know it, his real boss wasn't the Emperor Tiberius in Rome, it was Satan! He was Tiberius' boss too. John wrote that the whole world lies in the evil one. (1 John 5:19). Jesus had rejected Satan's offer of worldly kingship some three years earlier. Jesus' present kingdom is a spiritual one, and people can currently choose to be His subjects or not. But the time will come when Jesus' kingdom will be visible and material. When the world will be filled with the glory of God, and the Torah will go forth from Mount Zion. Satan will be in the abyss then.

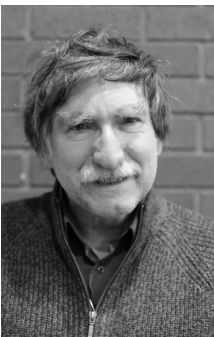
Jesus told Pilate that He was born to give witness to the truth. What truth? The truth of God's righteousness, and that Jesus is that righteousness. Jesus is the King of righteousness! God looks for righteousness in this world and doesn't find it. There is none righteous, no not one. But Jesus is God's righteousness and God imputes (that means legally gives) that righteousness to those who trust in Jesus. Jesus told Pilate that everyone that is of the truth hears Him. This must have made Pilate so uncomfortable. He snaps at Jesus, “What is truth?” before rushing out to the accusers to proclaim Jesus' innocence. But Jesus' accusers weren't interested in truth – they just wanted Him dead. And to that end they were able to manipulate Pilate.

Pilate had to decide about Jesus. He knew that Jesus was innocent, but ultimately, in his own self-interest, he handed Jesus over for crucifixion. Pilate didn't want any misunderstandings from Tiberius!

If you haven't yet decided about who Jesus is, then consider the passage that we read at the beginning of this Beacon. Don't make Pilate's rash decision to do away

with Him. Pilate knows without a doubt who Jesus is now. Submit your heart to the King of Righteousness.

Amen.



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